

# THE DREISER NEWSLETTER

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## THE TANGLED WEB: OFFSTAGE ACTING IN *SISTER CARRIE*

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In *Sister Carrie* the drive to become what one is not asserts itself repeatedly as Dreiser exploits the human inclination to dissimulate. Carrie herself stands always at the center of this pretense, and since we know practically nothing of her pre-Chicago days, we begin with her train ride into the city, where she begins innocently enough, playing the naive village maiden opposite the wily advances of Charles Drouet, who himself knowingly adopts the stereotypical role of the "masher" bent on seduction. Eventually, Carrie does become a famous actress, but by the time she enters upon her stage career she is prepared for professional role-playing through much experience and in many different modes.

Carrie's pretenses at first are small ones, of a hesitant and socially prudent nature. Upon arriving in Chicago, for instance, she very understandably does not want it known that she, a single girl of eighteen away from home for the first time, has encouraged a male stranger to strike up an acquaintanceship with her, so she sends Drouet on his way before meeting her sister Minnie; and once seeing the shabbiness of the Hansons' flat, she fibs to Drouet that he may not come calling because her sister's place is too small a place for her to entertain company. Sven and Minnie Hanson are prominent among the few characters in the novel who forswear pretension. They exist in utter economic reality on a bottom rung of the success ladder but hope to improve their lot over an extended

period through hard work and strict economy. Sven is employed in the Chicago stockyards, which manufacture products for the nation's households that range from tinned ham to combs of bone to soap and pure leaf lard. Laboring a long day cleaning refrigerator cars while his wife keeps the flat and worries about stretching eighty cents to cover the cost of dinner, Sven and Minnie act as effective foils for Carrie. Their poverty-haunted honesty is an affront to her vague but high-flying ambitions and, having discovered their utterly prudent nature, she takes every precaution to shield her innermost thoughts from them.

Carrie is a natural mimic. A total neophyte in job-hunting, she very closely observes the girls who have employment in the department stores and begins to act and look as much like them as she can manage. At last locating a job, albeit of a menial type, she dons her first calculated costume, a blouse of dotted blue percale, a skirt of light brown serge, old shoes and crumpled necktie. With a straw hat atop her brown curls, she sallies forth, "a very average looking shop girl."<sup>1</sup> Subsequently, whenever she changes roles, new costumes become a regular accompaniment to the pretense. Her first grueling day at the sweatshop ended, she changes clothes with the prospect that Drouet might come calling; and when she is outfitted anew, we are told that she appears "a rather sweet little being with large eyes and a sad mouth" (57). Unfortunately for her, Drouet does not appear on this evening, so she has costumed herself in vain. The Hansons take Carrie walking in Garfield Park, but as she observes the costumes worn by the other girls she is far from pleased; her clothes do not look good enough.

All of these actions are explained readily enough; they are contained within a normal range, in line with average human wants. But Carrie takes a step into deeper waters after losing her job at the shoe factory. Unable to find other work and lacking the moral strength to admit her failure at home, she claims to have been promised a place at the prestigious Boston Store. That lie of convenience is a dangerous one. It pressures her to escape from its natural consequences by accepting Drouet's offer of money; and that act leads at once to her acceptance of additional "help," which involves going off to live with him. It becomes essential for Carrie to assume a wholly new persona. Until now she has been known as Minnie Hanson's sister. But Drouet escorts her on a shopping tour and outfits her properly for a different role in new shoes, purse, gloves, and the fashionable tan jacket with mother-of-pearl buttons she has lusted after. "Now you're my sister" (80), he announces, and before she knows it he has installed her under that pseudonym in a rooming house. She

andons her sister's home in the dark of night, leaving a  
plicitous note that reveals no trace of her new role and does  
t include a forwarding address.

Carrie's status is soon "upgraded" into that of mistress,  
casting-manager Drouet, who installs her in a nice little  
at in Ogden Place; "You're Mrs. Drouet now" (105), says he,  
though marriage is not in the cards. She is content for the  
me being to play the role in which she is cast. In the pier  
ass of her new flat, she sees two persons, one a prettier  
rl than she has ever seen before,<sup>2</sup> the other a worse; but  
nce she has only "an average little conscience" (103) she is  
t bothered morally for long and goes about playing "Mrs.  
ouet" in earnest. She does not love the salesman, but of  
urse pretends to care deeply, aided through her discovery by  
rewd observation of exactly what type of girl it is that  
ouet most admires: pretty, stylish in costume, chin carried  
gh, body swinging with grace. Drouet escorts Carrie often  
the Chicago playhouses, and at home before her mirror she  
-enacts the dramatic situations she has witnessed on stage,  
ending the theatrical with the real as she imitates the  
vements and expressions and even the dialogue of various  
genues whose performances she and Drouet have admired.  
eing that Drouet is held by the self-conscious swaying of a  
rl's hips as she strolls along, Carrie determines to fit that  
ld: "If that was so fine, she must look into it more  
losely. Instinctively, she felt a desire to imitate it.  
rely she could do that too" (112). Her talent for mimicry  
erves Carrie well, and she is set for a long and successful  
m in this "real-life" drama--until she meets George  
urstwood.

Now the cast expands to include three players in a  
riangular plot. Drouet and Hurstwood both earn their daily  
read as "actors," in a sense, being engaged not in typical  
roduction jobs in industrial Chicago, but in the emerging  
ervice industries. Drouet is a salesman and Hurstwood an  
fficial "greeter" in a grand saloon. Of these two actors,  
rouet is the more limited in range. He plays to perfection  
he one-dimensional, stereotyped drummer, the "jolly salesman"  
114):

He was vain, he was boastful, he was as deluded by fine  
clothes as any silly-headed girl. . . . His fine success  
as a salesman lay in his geniality. . . . He bobbed about  
among men, a veritable bundle of enthusiasm--no power  
worthy the name of intellect, no thoughts worthy the  
adjective noble, no feelings long continued in one vein.  
(72)

As a traveling representative of Bartlett, Caryoe & Company, Drouet assumes a suitably-flashy drummer's costume: striped or cross-patterned suit, shirt with white and pink stripes, oversize gold cufflinks set with yellow agates, seal rings on his fingers, gold watch chain with an Elks Lodge insignia dangling across his vest, grey fedora hat, and yellow shoes, highly shined. While we do see Drouet perform often as actor/manager in his domestic drama, casting his major actress, Carrie, as sister, wife, and then as betrayer, we never observe him at work in his professional acting role of salesman. Dreiser holds to his single set--Chicago--and Drouet seems always to be "on tour" with his one-man "show" as he travels throughout the upper midwest playing for his various commercial "audiences," sometimes taking Carrie with him on the train. But from time to time he comes home to tell of well-received performances given in the hotels and shops of Omaha or Rock Island. He is fond of re-enacting for Carrie his various triumphs, and when at one point she inquires how his show has gone over in La Crosse, he describes how he successfully upstaged a rival and secured a customer: "Oh fine; sold him a complete line. There was another fellow there, representing Burnstein, a regular hook-nosed sheeny, but he wasn't much. I made him look like nothing at all." (148) Drouet is type-cast; he plays his part superbly and will continue to play it "until he [is] dead" (137), through the years growing only more practiced and thus more successful at peddling himself and whatever wares he represents.

George Hurstwood is a considerably more subtle actor, and we do see him as he performs, for he is employed in Chicago, where his natural abilities have placed him rather high on the ladder of economic status. His job as manager of Fitzgerald and Moy's saloon requires that he modify his role continually. The saloon itself has most of the accoutrements of a theater--bright lights, rich costumes, and action which is mostly pretend--and Hurstwood is "on stage" all the time, seeing and being seen by a broad spectrum of prosperous clients: politicians, merchants, and professional actors, as well as lesser lights such as Drouet. Hurstwood's manner alters according to the person he is addressing. His black eyes typically convey a look of "cold make-believe" (51), but they can also fill with warmth to the degree demanded by the occasion:

He had a finely graduated scale of informality and friendship, which improved from the "How do you do?" addressed to the fifteen-dollar-a-week clerks and office attaches, to the "Why old man, how are you?" which he addressed to those noted or rich individuals who knew him and were inclined to be friendly. (49-50)

urstwood's job, Dreiser says, is intimately bound up with creating a good impression" (49), which is precisely what an actor does; and with the very rich, famous, or successful, urstwood has yet a finer persona to advance, one which is suave, dignified, and deferential. On another level entirely and a middle range of habits (which includes Drouet) with whom he need not dissemble so greatly but can act more like himself, indulging in long conversations on their mutual interests in horse-racing or the theater. He is accustomed to playing the chameleon.

Like Drouet in his role as drummer, Hurstwood, it is said, "look[s] the part" (48) of the successful manager that he is. His demeanor has much to do with creating this impression, but his costume, too, is impeccable, and this is what first impresses Carrie. When Hurstwood invites her and Drouet to accompany him to a play and she has a good opportunity to observe and compare the two men on the level of costume, Hurstwood wins hands down. Drouet's suits not only are blatant in their flashiness, but he favors fabrics so new they "creak." Hurstwood's are of "medium stiffness" (107), always just right, and by this time Carrie has developed sufficiently in the matter of "taste" to see and appreciate the difference. Above his vest of "rich Scotch plaid" Hurstwood displays a lilken cravat which is "not loud, not inconspicuous" (107); but it is their footwear which particularly sets the two men apart. Drouet's shoes of brilliantly polished patent leather appear sadly gauche to Carrie as they contrast with Hurstwood's of black calf, soft and gleaming with their unobtrusive shine. He is greatly swayed by this facade.

As the love triangle deepens, all three players dissemble, but Carrie and Hurstwood, who are more naturally expert, pretend to the point of deception. The stakes are high. Two households are involved, for Hurstwood is married and maintains a fine brick home on the North Side of Chicago, where he lives with Julia, his wife, and his son and daughter, George, Jr., and Jessica. They are a family of pretenders, the lot of them. Mrs. Hurstwood puts on airs, aspiring to a rung on the social ladder above her own; Jessica is much the same, forever mimicking the truly wealthy girls at her high school. George, Jr., like his father, is involved in a service industry (real-estate) and with the family is secretive, "not laying bare his desires for anyone to see" (94). At age nineteen (only a year older than Carrie) and living at home, he plays constantly at convincing others that he is a man with a man's privileges, but fools no one.

Hurstwood becomes seriously involved with Carrie only after she has made a success at acting in the benefit staged by

Drouet's Elks Lodge; until that moment he has only pretended to love her, purely as a means of seduction, his object being a backstreet romance. Now, however, infatuated with her stage persona and ardently courting her, he encounters problems of a new nature. Drouet and Carrie have pretended to be married, but Carrie is led to speculate on whether Drouet has revealed this pretense to Hurstwood. He has not done so in a literal sense; but Hurstwood has picked up on clues and suspects this to be the case; however, since he has feigned a belief in Carrie's married state, he finds that he has to carry out the part. He spends long hours at 29 Ogden Place and takes Carrie for buggy rides in the Chicago area, at the same moment continuing to court respectability with his dignity of manner, his unblemished record of decorum, and his conventional family life. Reputation is all-important, both at home and abroad.

Hurstwood is not quite as circumspect as he ought to be, however; at home he finds that he must somehow explain his various tardy appearances at dinner and his outright absences, and he does so by some rather bold lying. Julia Hurstwood, herself said to have "many a thought of her own which never found expression even by so much as the glint of an eye" (123), has found her husband out--she thinks. Cold and calculating, she bides her time, and eventually the strategic moment arrives for her grand ploy. She has made two discoveries which belie her husband's appearance of innocence. One is that Hurstwood has been spotted riding in a carriage accompanied by an unidentified woman. "Perhaps it was your daughter," suggests the physician who mentions this incident to her. Julia becomes instantly artful, inquiring whether the sighting had by any chance occurred in the afternoon; upon hearing that, yes, it had, she replies that of course it was Jessica, while knowing full well that Jessica had been occupied elsewhere. Another sighting reports Hurstwood uncharacteristically indiscreet in being seen with friends at Carrie's benefit performance, but without his wife. Mrs. Hurstwood lies, pleading that she had not been feeling well that day, only to be told that, yes, that is precisely the excuse Hurstwood had offered for her absence. Challenged by his wife, Hurstwood bluffs, assuming a lord-of-the-manner tone and wondering whether there might be any solid evidence against him, then understanding from Julia's manner that for once she is not pretending. He attempts one final and futile bluff, storming out of the house in response to his wife's threat to see a lawyer, a threat he mistakenly assumes to be pretense.

Meanwhile Drouet and Carrie are involved in their own domestic dissimulation, Carrie having pretended to be true to the salesman while actually pledging herself to the manager upon his pretense of intending to marry her. When Drouet

covers that Hurstwood has visited the apartment while he been away on a selling trip, he bribes the chambermaid under the pretense of admiring her ring in order to discover truth about the number of Hurstwood's repeated visits, which Carrie has deliberately minimized. Here Dreiser begins to play upon the word *act*, as Drouet thinks: "Look how they *acted!*" and "She did *act* sort of funny at times" (219, emphasis added). Drouet simulates indifference to Hurstwood's visits, while setting a trap to uncover the full truth about his relationship. Like Mrs. Hurstwood, he is himself acting, but with less skill. And Hurstwood, that "starched and conventional poser" (116), by his continued silence to Carrie concerning his own marital state, has been flying under false colors all along.

On the brink of having her infidelities discovered, Carrie presses Hurstwood for marriage; the irony is that she no more loves him than she has loved Drouet, but sees the new connection as being more advantageous. "How can you act this way, dearest?" (224) inquires Hurstwood, continuing the act in a mockery of being wounded by her demand. He drops his marriage pretense and presses her to run away with him, but Carrie shakes her head "as if in deep thought" (224, emphasis added). Now both are reading as if from a prepared script, giving "no sign" (224) of the true thoughts that pass through his brain, Carrie still wondering in hers whether it is worthwhile trying to maintain her untenable pretense of being married.

When Drouet springs his trap on Carrie, asking leading questions with studied nonchalance, she responds: "You act so funny to-night" (224). But the cat is soon out of the bag. Drouet announces Hurstwood to be a married man, and Carrie, who for some time has only been pretending to be true to Drouet (and who *must* have known or suspected Hurstwood to be married), accuses Drouet of having deceived her in bringing her manager home to visit under false pretenses. Drouet initiates his grand plan, a threat to abandon her; "he pretended to take up the task of packing some things in a valise" (251), taking much longer at this simple and needfully-spontaneous act than any truly injured man would do as he waits for Carrie to confess, throw herself on his mercy, and promise to reform. But she, casting herself now in the role of injured party, is engaged in attempting to decide which man is the more grievous deceiver, he or Hurstwood, and refuses to speak a word about making domestic peace. "What's the use of acting like that now, Cad?" (253) asks Drouet; jamming his effects into his grip, he storms out, to take up bachelor residence at the Palmer House--where Hurstwood, turned out of doors by Julia, also has taken a room.

Carrie is nonplussed, wondering whether Hurstwood has forsaken her, puzzling over whether she will have to quit the comfortable rooms Drouet has furnished for her. She decides that the salesman's departure has been no more than pretense; "He only acted as if he were huffy" (267) and will soon be back on bended knee. Drouet, who ironically has developed a true affection for Carrie, does come back, on still another pretext, that of gathering more of his belongings to take to the hotel. Actually he is hopeful of encountering Carrie at home and somehow patching up the rift between them. But she is not in the apartment, has, in fact, gone off to the theater for some professionally melodramatic make-believe. It is just as well, for the relationship is broken irrevocably and the stage set for Hurstwood's most daring ploy; threatened with a divorce suit and under intense mental pressure, he steals ten thousand dollars from his employer's safe. In playing the criminal, he miscasts himself disastrously in a role for which he is unsuited either by temperament or experience. He comes for Carrie in the middle of the night under the guise of escorting her to a hospital where, supposedly, Drouet lies injured in an accident and is calling for her.

So utterly convincing an actor is Hurstwood at this point--and so caught off her guard is the genuinely distraught Carrie--that the next thing she knows she is on the night train for Montreal and a mock-wedding, and then New York, where she will live under the pretend-name of "Mrs. George Wheeler" and engage in still further dissimulation. In this manner, through "real life" theatricals played by people whose days are spent acting with and against one another, Dreiser effectively achieves an artistic counterpoint for the major action in Carrie's life--her rise to prominence on the professional stage, true home of illusion and ambiguity.

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<sup>1</sup>Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie* (New York, Boni & Liveright, 1917), 37. Future quotations from the novel will be indicated parenthetically after the quote.



# A DREISER CHECKLIST, 1985

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This checklist covers work on Dreiser in 1985 plus a number of items omitted from previous checklists. I wish to thank Shigeo Mizuguchi for providing the information on Dreiser studies published in Japan.

## . NEW EDITIONS, TRANSLATIONS AND REPRINTS OF DREISER'S WORKS

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## REVIEWS

### A SECONDARY BIBLIOGRAPHY

*Theodore Dreiser and the Critics, 1911-1982: A Bibliography with Selective Annotations*, by Jeanetta Boswell. Scarecrow Author Bibliographies No. 73. Scarecrow Press, 1986. x + 306 pp. \$27.50.

Since her retirement from the faculty of the University of Texas, Arlington, Jeanetta Boswell has made a career of compiling author bibliographies for the Scarecrow Press. *Theodore Dreiser and the Critics, 1911-1982* is her sixth, having been preceded by similar works on Emerson (1979), Whitman (1980), Melville (1981), Thoreau (co-author, 1981) and Hawthorne (1982).

This secondary bibliography follows what might be called the traditional arrangement for author bibliographies: following a list of anonymous works, items are organized alphabetically by the critics' last names. Under each critic, Boswell cites, in chronological order, works by the critic first, works edited next and works co-authored last. Commenting on the scope of her bibliography in her introduction, Boswell states:

For the most part I have dealt with English criticism published in America, but . . . there are some exceptions in cases of well-known European critics whose work has been translated into English or who have sometimes written in the English language. For the most part I have not listed reviews of Dreiser's works which were written for magazines and newspapers when the books were first published. . . . I have listed reviews when the authors had other important essays or when the reviewer has an otherwise well-established reputation.

After the bibliography, the compiler adds an index to co-authors, editors, translators, and illustrators, and a subject index.

Because an extensive amount of material on Dreiser has

appeared in print since the last secondary bibliography of Dreiser was published over ten years ago (Pizer, Dowell and Busch. G.K. Hall, 1975), a new bibliography was certainly needed. Unfortunately, however, a bibliography like Boswell's is not. Her workmanship can only be described as careless and sloppy, perhaps because of her desire to keep to a schedule of new work practically every year.

One does not have to look far to find evidence of carelessness. Among the 18 entries on the first two pages of the bibliography, one includes a wrong date and volume number (no. 6), two give wrong page numbers (nos. 11 and 14), two cite interviews given by Dreiser instead of works about him (nos. 9 and 16), and one cites a work by Dreiser under an incorrect title (no. 18). Some of these mistakes appeared in Ralph Miller's preliminary checklist of Dreiser (Western Michigan College Library, 1947) and were repeated in Hugh Atkinson's checklist (Kent State U. Press, 1971) and some appeared for the first time in Atkinson. But regardless of the source, every one of these mistakes was corrected in the 1975 Hall bibliography. Why didn't Boswell check it, if she didn't want to take the time, as she should have, to verify the works she cites?

Apparently Boswell did not check the 1975 Hall bibliography when she listed reviews either. For these citations she is content to repeat the often incomplete and sometimes erroneous information in Jack Salzman's compilation of reviews (*Theodore Dreiser: The Critical Reception*, David Lewis, 1972). Under Burton Rascoe, for instance, she fails to include page numbers for five entries, and under William Marion Reedy, she cites the wrong name of a serial (no. 1297), a wrong page number (no. 1299), an erroneous title, volume number and page number (no. 1300), an incorrect volume number and date (no. 1301), and a wrong volume number (no. 1302). Again, the complete and/or correct information appears in the Hall bibliography; perhaps, Boswell didn't feel the need to check it because she found Salzman's work "superbly edited and arranged to be the best possible scholarship of its kind."

Since Boswell seems content to pass along the mistakes of previous bibliographers, it is not surprising to find sloppiness in her own work as well. To cite just a few examples, she claims that an article published in *Literary Digest* in July of 1930 is a review of *Tragic America*, which was issued in December of 1931 (entry no. 13); she fails to distinguish between Llewellyn Jones' review of *An American Tragedy* and an unsigned editorial he wrote about the novel in January 1926 (no. 806); and she attributes an article I published in *Modern Fiction Studies* to Damon Runyon (no. 1353).

Despite its serious shortcomings in accuracy, one might still expect Boswell's work to be of some value to Dreiser scholars because of the annotations. But, even in this regard, its usefulness is marginal, at best. Indeed, one gets the impression that the decision to annotate an entry (note that the subtitle states "selective annotations") was based on availability rather than quality or the needs of the user. Time and again, works that are often reprinted or that appeared in journals held in almost every college library--in other words, works that are well-known or readily available--are annotated, and works that may be of value or interest to the scholar, but are not accessible except through interlibrary loan, are not. For example, one is not given annotations for Richard Dowell's essays in the *Indiana English Journal*, Philip Gerber's essay in *Carnegie Magazine*, Yoshinobu Hakutani's articles in *Discourse* and *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, and Joseph Kwiat's pieces in *American Quarterly*, *Sprache und Literatur*, and *Americana-Austriaca*.

In an address to the Northeast Modern Language Association in 1977 that was subsequently published in *Literary Research Newsletter* (3 (1978) 55-61), Jackson Bryer noted that "with the recent proliferation of enumerative bibliographies, there has not been a concomitant effort to see that all that gets into print is accurate, nearly complete, or carefully organized," and he goes on to suggest that "publishers of on-going enumerative bibliography series should employ not only series editors who oversee the organization and style of the volumes, but also readers of individual manuscripts . . . who would be asked to evaluate volumes on writers for whom they have a scholarly expertise." One wishes the Scarecrow Press had paid attention to Bryer's suggestion. If it had, I am quite certain that *Theodore Dreiser and the Critics* would not have been published.

Frederic E. Rusch



## THE DREISER NEWSLETTER TO BECOME DREISER STUDIES

Recently I was surprised to find the following entry in an advertisement of rare and first editions: "*The Dreiser Newsletter*, Spring 1970, wrappers, \$3.00"-six times its original price. As I sat staring at the three-hundred-plus copies of that first issue gathering dust on my bookshelves, my first thought was one of financial well-being. Then I began to take some satisfaction in the fact that the *DN* had been around long enough to achieve rare-book status--seventeen years. We had no such ambitions at the beginning.

The *DN* was the brain child of John Brady, a young English instructor who approached Professor Robert P. Saalbach and me in the Spring of 1969 with the idea that we should start a journal. Brady wanted the experience of being managing editor of a publication and reasoned that since Terre Haute was Dreiser's birthplace and Professor Saalbach and I had written dissertations on Dreiser, the *DN* was a natural for our English Department. The suggestion was timely, for about then Professor Saalbach and I were in the early stages of planning the Dreiser Centennial, to be held at Indiana State University in August 1971. A newsletter seemed the ideal vehicle for announcing our plans and stimulating interest in the celebration. So while Brady secured funding from our department chairperson and set about the task of attracting subscribers, I wrote Dreiser scholars and editors of other newsletters for advice and support.

Joseph Katz, then editor of the *Crane Newsletter*, responded with a dire warning. He noted that the contributions to a newsletter came in "waves, followed by deep troughs," and unless the editors were prepared on occasion to write the entire issue, we should abandon the idea entirely. "This may sound severe," Katz concluded, "but you will come to view it the best and most realistic advice you may receive." The others I contacted were more encouraging, and seven Dreiser scholars agreed to serve as contributing editors: Hennig Cohen, University of Pennsylvania; Philip L. Gerber, State University College at Brockport, N.Y.; Richard Lehan, UCLA; John McAleer, Boston College; Donald Pizer, Newcomb College,

Tulane University; Claude M. Simpson, Jr., Stanford University; and Neda Westlake, the Charles Patterson Van Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania. Over the years, we have also been privileged to list on our masthead Ellen Moers, Barnard College; Jack Salzman, Long Island University; Lawrence E. Hussman, Wright State University; T. D. Nostwich, Iowa State University; and Thomas P. Riggio, University of Connecticut. Of the original seven, Gerber, Lehan, McAleer and Westlake (retired) remain with us, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their long and generous service.

The first issue of the *DN* was sixteen pages in length and contained material which we felt fell within the purview of a newsletter: an airmail interview with W. A. Swanberg; an essay by Donald Pizer on work to be done in Dreiser studies; an inventory of the Dreiser manuscript holdings at Indiana University's Lilly Library by Richard W. Dowell; Philip Gerber's review of Moers' *Two Dreisers* and Lehan's *Theodore Dreiser: His World and His Novels*; and a summary of plans for the Dreiser Centennial. The following issues featured much the same fare, with the addition of an annotated checklist of the previous year's Dreiser scholarship.

By the Spring of 1972, however, some changes had taken place. The Centennial, having been celebrated, no longer gave the *DN* its primary reason for being, but the journal to our minds had proved to be at least a modest success. Our subscriptions numbered well over two hundred, and exchanges with other journals were enriching our departmental library; the *DN*'s size had grown to 24 and 28 pages; and the submissions were numerous and of a scholarly nature. Also, Ellen Moers, then a contributing editor, was bubbling with ambitious plans for us. So we saw no reason to do other than continue the journal.

Over the years, my personal association with the *DN* has been a happy marriage. Some of my most rewarding friendships in the profession have resulted from my role as editor. Also, I was most flattered in 1971 when Robert Penn Warren turned to us for help with his *Homage to Theodore Dreiser*, calling the *DN* "the mother church of Dreiser studies." I have been pleased to see in *American Literary Scholarship* and other bibliographical works that the *DN* articles are typically well regarded and comprise an impressive portion of each year's scholarly output. And I have been gratified to learn on occasion that we have accepted a young scholar's first published article and thereby provided much-needed encouragement at a crucial time. This year at the MLA Convention, one such scholar, now with an impressive bibliography to his credit, told me that his submission to the *DN* ended a string of rejections. Had we not

accepted the essay, he would have spent what turned out to be most productive summer painting his house. For these and certainly other reasons, I am convinced that the *DN* has served worthwhile function for all concerned.

But, alas, Joe Katz' prediction has come true. Over the past five years, the manuscript contributions have slowed to a trickle. As a result I have written and published more than seems for an editor to place in his own journal. I have also gone repeatedly to my contributing editors, hat in hand, to say that the cupboard is bare. And they have never failed me. Clearly, however, this is not a healthy state, so a decision must be made. When Matthew J. Bruccoli "killed" the *Fitzgerald Newsletter* in 1968, he did so because "its work was done." I do not believe that the work of the *DN* has been completed. Rather, with the increased interest and scholarship doubtless to be stimulated by the *Pennsylvania Edition*, there would seem to be an even greater need for a journal that will stay abreast of the activity. We definitely wish to remain a part of what promises to be a rich period in Dreiser studies. On the other hand, we feel that for some time the *DN* has exceeded the scholarly ambitions and expectations typically associated with a newsletter. Thus, having consulted with some of the contributing editors and other persons involved in the production of the journal, we have decided to advertise these ambitions and expectations by becoming *Dreiser Studies*, starting with the Spring 1987 issue.

How this change will affect our format and publication schedule remains to be seen. Hopefully, we will receive the number of quality manuscripts to justify our publishing a larger journal featuring longer articles, but for the present we will stay alive by continuing as we have in the immediate past and allow the evolution to take place naturally. It is of course our hope that this name change will signal the beginning of an even more satisfying and significant phase in the history of our journal. In the meantime, should any reader of the *DN* wish to purchase the Spring 1970 issue--obviously destined to become a collector's item--he or she can do so through our office for \$1.25, no wrappers.

Richard W. Dowell

## PENNSYLVANIA EDITION OF THEODORE DREISER ANNOUNCED

The officers of the University of Pennsylvania, the University Press, and the University of Pennsylvania Library have announced the formation of the *Pennsylvania Edition of Theodore Dreiser*, under the general editorship of Professor Thomas P. Riggio. The Pennsylvania Dreiser Edition will be comparable to such projects as the Twain Edition centered at Berkeley and the Thoreau Edition at Princeton University. It will seek to publish authoritative editions of Dreiser's books, as well as his journalism, letters, diaries, and related writing.

Several projects are already underway, and they will be incorporated under the new Pennsylvania Edition guidelines. These projects include Dreiser's European diaries, edited by Rolf Lunden; *Newspaper Days*, edited by T. D. Nostwich; *Dawn*, edited by T. D. Nostwich and Thomas P. Riggio; and *Jennie Gerhardt*, edited by James L. W. West III. In addition, there will be projects related to, but not officially included in the edition: Nostwich's edition of Dreiser's newspaper writings of the 1890s and Riggio's two-volume edition of the Dreiser-Mencken correspondence, the latter scheduled to appear in the fall of 1986. Clearly, these and other projects initiated by the Edition will stimulate more interest in and work on Dreiser, particularly since so much new material will be made available to the scholarly community. Nostwich's *Newspaper Days*, for example, will present a good deal of writing that has remained in manuscript to this point; this will also be true of *Dawn*, as well as most books that will be part of the Edition.

As General Editor, Riggio's major functions are to organize and chair the editorial board; to oversee the creation of a standard editorial manual; to appoint appropriate textual scholars to edit Dreiser's major works; to plan a publication schedule for the Edition; to work with the University of Pennsylvania Press in designing and producing the volumes; and to seek external support for editorial and publication costs. A further aim of the Dreiser Edition will be to supplement the

Dreiser Collection whenever possible; thus, Professor Riggio requests that anyone who knows the whereabouts of fugitive Dreiser papers contact him so that copies may be sought. He will also be happy to answer any questions regarding the edition. Such questions can be directed to him c/o the English Department, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT 06268, or c/o the Rare Book Collection, Van Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA 19104.

Richard W. Dowell

## MARGUERITE TJADER HARRIS: A REMEMBRANCE

On April 7th of this year Marguerite Tjader Harris died after a two-month illness at age eighty-four in Miami, Florida. Mrs. Harris served as literary secretary to Dreiser between 1928, when they first met, and the early 1940s. In 1944 she joined Dreiser at his request in California, where he was working on his Quaker novel, *The Bulwark*. She helped him see it through to its conclusion by the summer of 1945, a few months before his death.

Mrs. Harris was the author of a novel, *Borealis*, published in 1930. Between 1937 and 1945, *Direction* magazine, which she founded and edited, featured important contributors. Among them were Dreiser, Dos Passos, and Erskine Caldwell. Her 1965 book *Theodore Dreiser: A New Dimension* brought an original perspective to Dreiser studies, informed as it was with her knowledge of the novelist's late spiritual affirmation. A decade later she prepared, with John McAleer, the University of Alabama Press edition of Dreiser's *Notes on Life*. She wrote two religious books, *Mother Elizabeth* (1972) and *Birgitta of Sweden* (1980). At the time of her death she left unpublished manuscripts of two novels and a study of the architect Le Corbusier, as well as an intriguing memoir about Dreiser called *The Lust of the Goat Is the Bounty of God*.

I first met Marguerite during the Dreiser Centennial observances at Terre Haute in 1971. I knew her *New Dimension* book at the time and was anxious to talk with her about the last years of the great novelist's life, the special focus of my doctoral dissertation. We became friends immediately. She was a compelling personality with an uncommon strength of

character and conviction. In the ensuing years we corresponded regularly and exchanged ideas about Dreiser and our various writing projects. I had the privilege of working with her on the Dreiser papers at the University of Pennsylvania's Van Pelt Library. In 1981 she came to Dayton to make an English department colloquium presentation at Wright State and to speak to the students in my graduate seminar devoted to Dreiser's novels. She was a great success in both appearances, charming her audiences with her special anecdotes and insights.

I also had the pleasure of visiting Marguerite at her beautiful home in Darien, Connecticut. She lived in a carriage house at Vikingsborg, her family's estate on Long Island Sound. The carriage house was one of seven buildings on the grounds. The others she had donated to an order of Swedish nuns who had established the Convent of St. Birgitta in them. I well remember Marguerite guiding me on a tour of the main building with its many art objects. She had collected the pieces from all over the world and had commissioned the chapel's marvelous stained-glass windows.

After meeting Dreiser, Marguerite was without doubt his most passionately loyal advocate. In her writing and speaking about him she always enthusiastically championed his literary reputation. Some of the readers of this *Newsletter* will remember her ardent statement of his significance at the last MLA special Dreiser session. The zeal with which she always urged the cause made her controversial among critics and scholars. I, for one, admired her intense love of Dreiser and his work, a love that, to borrow a phrase from her favorite novel, *The Bulwark*, was an "intimate relation to the very heart of being."

Lawrence E. Hussman

## DREISER NEWS & NOTES

G. P. Putnam's Sons has published Richard Lingeman's *Theodore Dreiser: Volume One: At the Gates of the City, 1871-1907*, which is scheduled for review in our Spring 1987 issue. . . . Harold J. Dies, executor of the Dreiser Estate, informs us that the American National Theatre has decided not to take up their option to produce the 1981 version of *Sister Carrie*. In the Spring 1986 issue of the *DN*, we quoted Stuart Thompson, then Co-Executive Director, that the play might go into production in late spring or early summer. Thompson has since left the American National Theatre. . . . While admitting that the "name Theodore Dreiser might seem far removed from the litter and high seriousness that we associate with *Forbes*' annual celebration of the 400 richest people in America," Peteraida of *Forbes 400* (October 27, 1986) has credited Dreiser with "the fullest and most ambitious treatment of the career of a business tycoon that any American novelist has managed" and has challenged *Masterpiece Theatre* "to take a close look at Dreiser's trilogy--well over 1,000 pages about money, sex and power."

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